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# **Artistic Research**

– Theories, Methods and Practices

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## Preface

The accumulation of knowledge in the artistic field is a form of research. Artists carry out research about the reality that surrounds them, about themselves, about their instruments of work, and about the complex networks linking these.

Subjects like poetics, aesthetics and composition – with their interpretive and empathic views on art – have been well established in universities for centuries.

Artistic research means that the artist produces an art work and researches the creative process, thus adding to the accumulation of knowledge. However, the whole notion of artistic research is a relatively new one, and, indeed, its forms and principles have yet to become firmly established.

It is of great importance that this kind of research is given a fair chance to develop free from excessive formalities, and that the basis for the systematic accumulation of knowledge in the artistic field can be built upon practice. Also, a specific artistic relationship to research can establish a dynamic relationship to other kinds of knowledge within the universities – from medicine to the history of fine art.

Gothenburg University has been involved with artistic research and development since the 1970s. Since the creation of the Faculty of Fine Arts in 2000, a unique and solid basis for multi-disciplinary

artistic research has been established. The University is very happy to be able to publish this book in cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts of Helsinki, where a doctoral programme in artistic research has been operating since 1997. This book is a sign of the fruitful collaboration between the two institutes.

We hope that this book will stimulate artistic research and further its development, and it would make us delighted if it could promote discussion in the fascinating field of art in its theory and practice.

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The project has benefited greatly from various persons' contributions. Research Secretary Johan Öberg from the University of Gothenburg supported the project in a crucial way. Senior Researcher Seppo Aura and his methodological work in architectural research at Tampere University of Technology provided a fruitful conversation and research partnership. Architect and philosopher Gareth Griffiths not only translated our "Finglish" but also offered substantial comments and suggestions throughout the writing process. Finally, Henri Tani made a tremendous job in creating the look of the book.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The Current Situation in Artistic Research

The plan might sound a bit strange and even self-indulgent, but that is not our fault. We are about to forge a path through what may be unknown terrain, a path along which we will have to get used to the strange and demanding role of the pioneer. What we have set out to do and write about is something which until now did not exist, or at least as far as we know. This book is the first full-length focused methodological analysis of the new academic *modus operandi* or discipline called 'artistic research'. It is framed by practice-based and practice-driven research within that large entity that is called 'contemporary culture'. Its attitude is to open and to include, not to exclude or to build barriers between mediums of expression and methods of knowledge production.

The present book surveys the whole scope of the still young field, in terms of its theoretical background, methods and practices. The idea is to provide an extensive methodological manual for all who are active and interested in artistic research. The book is addressed to all

participants across the domain, from practicing artists already doing research or starting to be interested in research practices to supervisors and professors crediting and tutoring these activities. But foremost this book is addressed to the potential students and researchers in this heterogeneous field, at both the Master of Arts and Ph.D. levels.

The main source for our examples and cases studies is contemporary art and visual culture. We are fully aware that each artistic field – from music to theatre and dance to design – has its own specialties that are not fully compatible with those in the other fields. However, while respecting these differences, we believe there is fruitful and meaningful common ground to be shaped and articulated, and valid for all approaches and mediums.

Our book focuses on the possibilities, challenges and demands of artistic research as an area that slowly but surely is articulating its own criteria of research based on its individual characteristics and practices. Our viewpoint comes from a combination of qualitative research approaches and particular characteristics of artistic practice.

We are analysing artistic research as a new opening for a wide variety of actors within contemporary art and culture. This whole issue is not about scientific research (as in art history or the sociology of art, for example), but about the self-reflective and self-critical processes of a person taking part in the production of meaning within contemporary art, and in such a fashion that it communicates where it is coming from, where it stands at this precise moment, and where it wants to go.

This book is an up-dated and extended version of *Otsikko uusiksi – Taiteellisen tutkimuksen suuntaviivat* [Stop the Press – Guidelines for Artistic Research, 2003] by the same authors. Our collaboration on artistic research has combined our different backgrounds. In his previous work, Mika Hannula has been especially interested in the ethical aspects of art and contemporary culture, as well as the larger context in terms of philosophy of politics. Juha Suoranta has concentrated, among other things, on questions of (qualitative) research methodology, critical

pedagogy, and political sociology of education. For his part, Tere Vadén has worked in philosophy of science, in general, and on the question of the identity and role of science in contemporary society, in particular. These interests all seem to converge around artistic research.

The reason for publishing an English version is very simple: since the publication of the first book, our original hunch has grown stronger and the evidence more credible. What we see and hear is a need for carefully argued for criteria, principles and guidelines that are situated in both qualitative research and artistic practises. We have to keep in mind that even though artistic research has certainly been produced at various moments over the last twenty years, the research methods in the different fields of art and artistic expression – from music via design to theatre and from the visual arts to visual culture – are still only in the process of evolving, both in themselves and in relation to other research traditions.

There are both risks and opportunities in the existing situation. The situation is best described as one of confusion; something which has been observed – and admitted with some embarrassment – at several international conferences. The meaning of the subject is understood, and is without doubt seen as being important. But the question is, how and within what framework should artistic research be carried out? Some recent examples seen as both impressive and popular (i.e. necessary and important) are the six-part conference series "Interrupt – Artists in Socially Engaged Practices" arranged by Arts Council England in 2003, the two-year project "re:search – in and through the arts" arranged by ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts) together with Berlin Universität der Künste, which will come to an end at the end of 2005, and the systematic and ongoing debating and studying of the matter in Gothenburg at several multidisciplinary conferences and events (such as ArtTech Sublime). Apart from these, there are a couple of anthologies on artistic research available, containing articles that certainly describe the expanse of the field, yet leave a rather vague and

indeterminate overall impression (see, for instance: Hannula 2004, Holridge & Macleod 2005, Miles 2005, Källemark 2004). An accurate overall picture of the methodology of artistic research has yet to be published.

If and when the many institutes and artists in rather numerous countries have understood the potential and opportunity of artistic research, the new field – and the changes taking place along with it – will also create a negative reaction. The bureaucratization of art in order to make it an academic and stuffy 9-to-5 job, as well as pressures for change in arts education and its support structures, become a threat. There is naturally also confusion in the meaning and use of the central terminology – not to mention confusion about what is understood by methodology and the legitimacy of research and its critique.

In this book we want to see the existing situation as an opportunity. That opportunity entails, above all, actively participating in dispelling confusion, the process-like adaptation of the field, and developing a sufficiently resilient self-confidence. And as the contents page of the book indicates, our aim is to concentrate specifically on those very features which, unfortunately, are still ignored in the international debate.

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that the prevailing situation not only is a concrete opening move for artistic research to articulate its own opinions on what it wants, but also presents new questions for the general methodology of the human sciences. It is high time to dare to open the window, to jump out of it, enjoying the flight, views and landing. Obviously the above issues touch just as much anyone undertaking science, or having an interest in it, as those who want to understand art and culture. The aim perhaps should not, after all, be the creation of some kind of greenhouse for improving intellectual fertility, where researchers could push and praise each other over the specific borders of science and art. Instead, it would be more meaningful to trust in a more realistic alternative, where transcending borders happens if and when it is meaningful and important for both

parties. At the same time, the individual and autonomous development of each field – which by its nature should be communicative and outward-looking – is prioritised, which requires time and resources. This implies that, instead of a top-down model or intervention, there has to be enough room, courage and appreciation for organic, content-driven development and growth.

Researchers and their communities need both tools to deal with artistic experiences (which would make the activity more scientific) and the opportunity to work in peace, to achieve peace of mind, and to trust in the meaningfulness of what they do. Such a trust is established when the research community ensures that it can define its own activities. The question is, in other words, about scraping together traditional academic autonomy. The scientific community's ongoing internal critique and debate creates the research tradition and the ways in which to assess research. The ideals of self-definition and self-maintenance are realised in the everyday life of the scientific community. The scientific community must both allow and value diversity, mutual criticism and critique which take shape both externally and internally. It is essential that any tradition, or a part thereof (i.e. any practice or institute), is able to perceive, as a real research aim, what kind of a collective and common stage it forms for the enactment of specific contradictions and interpretations.

Our contention is that the very fact that artistic research becomes commonplace will save us from the crushing weight of external ideals that are often alien to artistic research. This will give us the opportunity for a perhaps troublesome and even sticky path towards an increasingly mature and tolerant scientific-artistic culture. This way of defining scientific quality itself from the everyday viewpoint of research is quite a different matter than a methodological 'guarantee of quality'. The self-definition of the everyday occurs by throwing oneself on the mercy of the difficulty of the task, and consequently the possibility of failure. Through self-definition, traditional virtues (e.g. being



critical) and the importance of the time and place reserved for doing research, also become important. We argue in favour of methodological anarchy and tolerance. In our opinion, high-standard and mature research is characterised qualitatively by the specific features of tolerance and diversity. Thus we also aspire to a channel of communication that would more extensively support the ability to attempt and to err, to fail and to give value also to others, particularly in those fields of science concerned with the human being and people. We hope that a discussion about research can be carried out specifically in the field of artistic research – and on its own terms.

The discussion about artistic research has often been motivated by external reasons, the limitations of the administration and the various competing schools of thought. Even ugly consequences have not been avoided in the discussions and assessments. Various standard views of 'science' have usually guided the assessment by which people have sought for some one-and-only correct way to carry out artistic research. As we see it, however, there is reason to keep the doors open to experimentation and making mistakes, and in this way enhance conceptual understanding. There is no reason to present rigid and methodical guidelines, but rather one should strive for openness and encourage daring experimentation (see Hannula 2002, Jones 2005).

Researchers must have the courage to come to terms with the diffuseness and uncertainty of a new research field. Such boldness is not born within the vacuum or muteness of institutions. Therefore, we also encourage an institutional anarchy that nurtures and raises courageous researchers. What we want to understand with the notions of institutional and methodological anarchy will be articulated at length in chapter 2.2; but already here it is necessary to note that with anarchy we definitely do not refer to, or strive for, the institutional reality of full-scale uncertainty, poor job security, the large-scale usage of a part-time workforce, non-transparent decision making and a lack of overall responsibility. Thus, for us, in short, anarchy refers to method-

ological and research-based experimentation, pluralism and tolerance. In terms of institutions, it refers to the necessity to allow experimentation, pluralism and tolerance, while at the same time having coherent and openly stated policies and aims.

It is no surprise that courage is always needed when something – anything – is undertaken for the first time or when one strives to continue something new and different, something deviating from previous. We claim that at this very moment – when artistic research has been carried out for a period varying from a few years to a couple of decades, depending on the artistic discipline – one must be able to deal with uncertainty. Otherwise artistic research will be threatened by a negative kind of normalization, the accumulating repetition of habits that deny the space and need for questioning and self-reflective inner challenges. Courage is also needed because the results of artistic research are surprising in at least two different ways. Firstly, the results and end point should come as a surprise to the researcher. As an experiential and experimental activity, art leaves open the possibility for something unexpected happening. Secondly – due partly to the young age of the discipline and partly its very character – the contribution of the results of artistic research to the general scientific community is problematic. Nevertheless, these surprises are something worth cherishing.

Taking a wider perspective of the whole field and its current situation, internationally it has been developed furthest in the Anglo-Saxon countries, although, as the ELIA example proves, there is a wide-reaching interest in the topic across Europe. Particularly in England and Scotland, experimentation with different models has been going on already for several decades. The projects are still rather strongly set within the framework of a written and scientific doctoral thesis or rely on practice-based studio work, purposely leaving aside any reflective literary element. In Britain the formation of the character of artistic research is linked with the whole development of the university institutions, and in particular with the systematic quality assessment initi-



ated by the central state. These latter reports on educational standards strongly control the allocation of research money. Consequently, there is a hard internal competition within the system, which ends up differentiating and localizing the nature of research, as well as the results. For this reason, one should look for points of comparison between each individual instance and cases with a sufficient structural correspondence (see Payne 2000, Holridge & Macleod 2005).

In comparison to the other Nordic countries, Finland is still clearly ahead in artistic research. One must keep in mind, however, that when it comes to numbers there are clear differences depending on the orientation of the institute. Scientific research is carried out by means of both scientific argumentation and artistic criteria. In the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki there exists a variation combining these two methods. According to the centralized Finnish Universities statistics, up to 2003 there were 27 doctorates completed in music, 2 in the visual arts, 11 in theatre, and 26 in design. While all Finnish art academies with university status have already for some time been working methodically in this new research field, other Nordic countries have only recently begun supporting artistic research, or are only in the process of picking up on it. Also, one should note the differences in both history and volume across the different fields of artistic expression and art academies.

Of the other Nordic countries, Sweden is clearly most active, Norway has followed a bit hesitantly behind since starting in 2004, while Denmark has by-passed the issue in the fine arts, but established a couple of years ago a research programme for design and the applied arts. Typically, following the example of Finland, music and music pedagogy are the most developed fields. Another area slightly more developed than the others is design. In the visual arts, doctoral theses have been systematically carried out in Sweden only since the beginning of the millennium, particularly in Malmö and Gothenburg. Activity began on a wider scale in 2001 and in the near future (2006–2009) several

doctoral theses in different artistic fields are expected to be completed. A corresponding peak in research, with a consequent domino effect on those completing their doctoral theses, can also be expected in Finland in the near future. What is particularly interesting is that research officials in Sweden have decided to recommend a research structure very close to the Finnish model, as used, for example, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. The core contents of the model are: prioritizing individual authorship; source-based research and the personal, individual identity of artistic research; and selecting researchers that do not come directly from the Masters degree level, but who are selected on the basis of the combination of the quality of their already existing artistic experience and production and the quality of their research project (the latter meaning that most of the researchers resemble more the so-called post-doctoral researchers in other fields) (see Karlsson 2001).

The present book does not come from nowhere, but is essentially committed and localized. It has its background, of course, in the different viewpoints of the three authors. Each of us has followed the (artistic) research and the ongoing debate about its methodology, and has tried to outline an approach to the uniqueness of artistic research (see, e.g., Hannula 2002, Hannula 2004, Aura, Katainen & Suoranta 2001, 2002, Suoranta 2003, Vadén 2002, 2003). Our cooperation in writing this book has been guided by the idea that "science" is not one well-defined entity, but rather that there are many sciences – in other words, organised practices which increase our understanding, concepts and ability to critique – and that the sciences can sometimes have different and possibly even incommensurable goals. On the other hand, we do not see this diversity and pluralism as a sign of the weakness of science or a shortcoming in its definition, but rather as a tool and goal one strives for. We see it as a tool because pluralism and polyphony, as methodological goals, increase our possibilities for understanding and experiencing the world. In turn, we see it as a goal because true diversity is, in our opinion, a necessary starting point for ethics.

The structure of the present book is as follows. After the introductory first chapter we will look in some detail in Chapter 2 (Two Metaphors and Their Consequences) at those theoretical and philosophical starting points that, in our opinion, can act as the background for artistic research. Because there is a lot of uncertainty and suspicion towards artistic research, we will deal at some length with the issue of scientific "maturity". What makes a research practice mature? How can maturity be attained in the different scientific fields? What about artistic research? Our answer is simple: the decisive factors are methodological diversity and critical self-reflection. Together these lead to the decisive observation that artistic research always deals with ethics.

In Chapter 3 (Methodological Faces of Artistic Research) we look more closely at different methodologies applicable to artistic research. The presentation does not aim to be in any sense comprehensive, but is rather an opening move and an awakening: one can at least start with these methods. At the same time, the methodological diversity of artistic research provides an impetus for a wider methodological debate and anchors artistic research within the field of the social and humanistic sciences. The task of the book is also to open up this field for the general public and to outline its basic contents to potential new students and researchers.

Chapter 4 (Artistic Research in Practice) presents examples of artistic research. We start by presenting the basic model for artistic research in a schematic form, our theses for how to proceed with artistic research, and the practical demands of research from the point of view of the researcher. We then present examples of completed artistic research. The purpose of the examples is to shed light on different approaches, both successful and less successful ones. The underlining thought in this chapter is that central to a postmodern ethics committed to place is the power of the example: ethical work is best carried out through examples. Also, it is fruitful to study artistic research through the examples of pioneering works.

In Chapter 5 (The Meaning of Artistic Research) we return to general methodological questions regarding the reliability and relevance of artistic research. If the title of the chapter brings to mind the famous book series *The Meaning of Liff*, that is all well and good. The issues of the relevance and reliability of artistic research are in a sense also concerned with looking for new meanings for old words; meanings that still are in a state of becoming. Relevance is decisive, as it is in research generally. Our claim is that in the case of artistic research, the issue of relevance is particularly tightly and naturally tied to an ethical attitude, to the localization of the "me" and "us" of the researcher. We also present some basic conditions that we feel artistic research must fulfil in order for it to be considered reliable.

The book contains no final summary or conclusion, but instead ideas about where artistic research could be headed and what its meaning could be to art on the one hand and to research on the other. In this context, it is also worthwhile considering those practical actions that the institutions and their staff – tutors, professors, critics, researchers and financiers – could adopt in order to assist the first tentative steps ahead.

## 1.2 The Need for Artistic Research

The term 'artistic research' has many meanings, connotations and implications. It is characterized by its continuous search for a current and convincing definition. It is a search that is not problematic in itself but, on the contrary, the plain necessity of a fruitful, self-reflective and meaningful setup. At the same time as providing the researcher with intellectual challenges and learning experiences, artistic research also participates in the development of the theoretical basis of the field. It can also enrich life and professional practices and lead to a variety of knowledge and skills, the meanings of which transcend the borders of the disciplines and forms.

The question of the need and importance of artistic research can also be approached through those aspects that already unite those working in the field. Professional artists feel that it is particularly important for them to be able to concentrate on a clearly defined theme over a longer period of time and with sufficient financial support to be able to work on it in terms of both depth and breadth. In recent years, in both seminars dealing with individual artistic research and more general seminars, a basic consensus over the nature of artistic research has evolved; a consensus which many of the researchers and trend-setters approve of and endorse (see, for example, Slager 2004, Biggs 2004, Jones 2005, Kiljunen & Hannula 2002).

At the core of the question of need and meaning are the personal and spontaneous. This entails the challenge to see the research from the researcher's viewpoint, and with the art work as the focal point. The artistic starting point offers a motor and motive, which both summarizes the totality and separates the details. In other words, it is possible to be rather of the same opinion about the general meaning of the essential characteristics of artistic research, but be rather strongly of a different opinion regarding the detailed contents and their effects. The following features seem at least to characterise most works of artistic research:

- The art work is the focal point. The art work tops the list of the priorities, from places 1 to 22, and still continuing.
- Artistic experientiality is the very core of the research, as is how it is transmitted and how it transmits a meaning.
- Artistic research must be self-reflective, self-critical and an outwardly-directed communication.
- The placement of artistic research in the historical and disciplinary context. The task is to continuously locate the research in relation to its own actions and goals, and at the same time to be localized in relation to the more focused context of the field.
- A diversity of research methods, presentation methods and com-

munication tools and their commitment to the needs and demands of each particular case.

- Emphasizing the fruitfulness and necessity of the dynamic research group situation, which in a collective effort provides the closest critical environment, the protective realm for experimentation and the ability to share thoughts and emotions.
- The hermeneutic, interpretative quality of research.

Consequently, artistic research has a loosely connected set of goals or purposes, through which its relevance becomes evident. These include, at least, the following:

- Producing *information that serves practice*; for instance, from ecological, psychological, social, cultural, economic, political, technical and functional points of view.
- Developing *methods* which are linked with, for instance, the processing of creative work, defining criteria for making evaluations or modelling and illustrating designs.
- Increasing *understanding* of the link between art and its social, cultural, and pedagogical context, helping to position the artist's work in a wider context, including the historical and political development.
- *Interpreting art works* as cultural, political, and pedagogical products.
- Producing knowledge about (among other things) the social, social-psychological and psychological as well as political and pedagogical meaning of art in order to develop *artistic activity* (e.g. *education, the living environment, the quality of life*).
- *Critically* analysing art and its current trends; the object being, among other things, an understanding of the relationships between art and technological development, and between art and economic development, power relationships, etc.
- Rethinking and questioning the role of the artist; the consequenc-

es not only of the death of the author, but also of the significant increase of collaborative artistic efforts, and the question of the role of an artist in society at large.

It is through such goals that art and research come together. Research requires concentration, in order to achieve a sufficient temporal perspective. This, in turn, offers the opportunity to withdraw oneself from the rapid and myopic cycle of making art, and instead to concentrate on a tenaciously and coherently chosen subject. The fact of artistic research becoming independent hopefully offers a fruitful opportunity for critical reflection among the research community – the community where, through creation and maintenance, the artists identify the contents, consequences and general directions of art through interaction, and by encouraging and supporting one another. The aim is to produce a new kind of information that is not introspective but combinative, outward-looking and seeking new connections. It is not a question of novelty for its own sake, but fresh connections and interpretations. In this way, artistic research can also have a meaning that is wider than its own narrowly conceived discipline. It produces social innovations by creating a new research trend in university education.

## 2 Two Metaphors and Their Consequences

There is no common philosophical-methodological basis for the things that have been done or are being done under the moniker of artistic research. This is actually a good thing. We are quite aware of and even happy with the current situation in which different examples of artistic research have different, incommensurable and even contradictory ontological, epistemological and practical starting points and commitments. Contrary to expectations, the intention of this theoretical chapter is not to outline a uniform or even universally desirable epistemological-ontological starting point for artistic research. Rather, the intention is to show why such a uniform starting point is not necessary and why the lack of one is not necessarily an indication of the immaturity of artistic research or any other methodological inferiority compared to the methods of more traditional research.

The intention of the following theoretical background to the artistic research is to show two things. Firstly, we wish to show that a uniform epistemological-ontological starting point is not necessary. Diversity and the consequent ethical challenge are positive things and, according to our understanding, promote the productivity of the research. Secondly, we wish to show that the theoretical background for artistic research is *intersubjective* and *scientific* – in many of those central senses that these two



words are employed (also) in present-day (natural) scientific research. In other words, the numerous starting points in scientific research do not (necessarily) result in an unscientific or subjective mess or a lack of principles. On the contrary, our intention is to show that artistic research can show the way towards scientific maturity.

The aim of the two metaphors of a *democracy of experiences* and *methodological diversity* is to show a *possible* starting point for artistic research. We do not claim that the starting point we present would be the only one, but merely that it is coherent. We accept physicist-philosopher Niels Bohr's demand for scientific objectivity, according to which objectivity means "coherent communicativity" (rather than arbitrary repeatability, non-subjectivity or an objectivity lacking a viewpoint).<sup>1</sup> The intention behind the theoretical starting point we present here is to provide one possible objective (in the Bohrian sense) epistemological-ontological framework for artistic research. We contend that a democracy of experiences and methodological diversity together characterise a possible mature, intelligible and coherent starting point for (artistic) research. In other words, the model we propose requires coherence only on its own terms, but does not claim that there would not be other coherent approaches. It also includes positive recommendations for the kinds of starting points and methodologies to be employed. In this sense, our proposed model is epistemologically and ontologically non-classical (see Plotnitsky 2002, ch. 1) and methodologically anarchistic (see Feyerabend 1975, 1999).

We feel that considerations having to do with the methodology of practice-based research might have an influence on the limits of practice-based research proper, especially when it comes to the interpretation of the ideals of science. This is because in practice-based research the ideals of openness

1 *The Philosophical Writings of Niels Bohr*. Ox Bow, Woodbridge, 1987, vol 3, p. 7; cited in Plotnitsky (2002, 23).

and criticality can not be achieved by the methods used in "traditional" natural science. By interpreting the ideals of openness and criticality from the vantage point of a democracy of experiences, artistic research may have an effect on other types of research.

## 2.1 Metaphor One: Democracy of Experiences

How is it possible, even in principle, to claim that the two terms, "art" and "research" go together, not to mention to claim that "artistic research" forms a practice that is viable and coherent? It is quite clear that there is a long and persistent tradition – with its occidental roots at least in the Greek classics – that has systematically pried art and research further and further apart. In this tradition – the heirs of which most of us are, whether we want it or not – it has been thought that fundamentally different modes of thinking, acting and being a human are at work in art and research. As a consequence, it has been considered best to keep the practices, teaching and results of art and research separate from each other. The result is a dualistic division in Western experience, not least inside the experiences of individuals. Cases where this difference is not evident (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Hildegard of Bingen, and the odd aesthete next door) are seen in one way or another as exceptions, if not even suspicious or abnormal.

Against this background, it is easy to guess how art and research can be pulled closer together. First of all, one must think that experience will not agree to divide itself up – and does not "naturally" divide – into the compartments of art and research. Secondly, one must show that the lack of such a division does not mean the watering down of the best aims of artistry and research. One must therefore strive to attain a situation where the non-dualistic and non-binary dialogue between the areas of the experience of art and research (and even other areas) is possible. And, at the same time, the important goals of art and

research – i.e. the influence of experience, objectivity or intersubjectivity, openness, and criticality – are preserved and maybe even strengthened. Put briefly, one must characterise the democracy of experience in order to give a coherently epistemological and ontological starting point and tell how and why artistic research can be part of a mature scientific practice.

### 2.1.1 The Demarcation of Scientific Research: Openness and Self-criticism

The special status and authority of science and research in general are typically justified by referring to the self-correcting nature of science and to the power of experience.<sup>2</sup> Science does not rely on authorities, and does not let any claim go without rigorous scrutiny and criticism. In a nutshell, science is open and critical – two criteria that set science apart from religion, technology and art, if not necessarily from philosophy.

Natural science and the connected scientific world-view include a more or less definite notion of how to achieve the goals of openness and self-criticism in everyday research. The special place given to experience is translated into naturalism: the idea that our experience of nature is best organised without assumptions of extra-natural creatures or phenomena. Being critical, on the other hand, is translated into the idea that scientific claims have to be constantly checked against the body of experience of nature that we have. Science is self-reflectively critical in that its day-to-day practice is about testing the claims and

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2 Such is the falsificationist demarcation of science given, for instance, in Karl R. Popper's seminal *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959); the Popperian view is disseminated in a multitude of textbooks, e.g., Chalmers (1976); for contemporary philosophical discussions, see, e.g., Niiniluoto (2002).

discarding the erroneous ones. Here, one type of experience, namely theory, is checked against another type of experience, namely systematic perception. The ideal of testability seems to be one of the roots for the contention that the natural sciences are in some sense more scientific than social science, not to mention the humanities or "artistic research": it is relatively easy to see how claims in natural science can be tested and, if need be, discarded. The crucial thing is that one type of experience, systematised (quantitative) perception, is given a critical priority over other areas of experience.

When openness and criticality are interpreted as merely a correspondence between theory and experience, and experience is thought to be about one uniform nature, the result is often a hierarchical picture of science: physics, as the most general and basic of sciences, is the first field that sets conditions for others, such as chemistry, biology and so on. The problems with this kind of hierarchy are well known and widely discussed, from philosophical perspectives – such as phenomenology and hermeneutics – and from the perspective of the sociology of science. Since we will be moving in the terrain of radical hermeneutics, it is worth already presenting one of these criticisms, one that can be seen as grounding many of the others. The father of phenomenological philosophy, Edmund Husserl, is one of the thinkers that has presented a meticulous and sustained criticism of naïve naturalism. For our present purposes, the main thing to notice in Husserl's wide reaching critique is that, according to him, naturalism is in danger of misunderstanding the ideals that it sets for itself. Husserl's (see, e.g., 1981/1911) criticism is that when the ideals of openness and criticality are realized by comparing theory to perceptions of nature, one has to assume that nature, as an object of experience, consists of objects or things. The problem with this assumption is that it makes naturalism incapable of answering questions concerned with human experience, such as the questions of how is experience possible, how is it born (out of something that is not experience), and how does perception achieve objectivity.

The problem of naïve naturalism may appear in two different ways. First, there is a consistent variety of naturalism that says that no observation ever registered in natural science makes it necessary to assume that something like experience exists. Experience has never been observed or perceived: all observations we have (in natural science) concern objects and forces. No natural science, be it physics, chemistry, biology or the like, contains a body of data that would be explainable only by assuming the existence of experience (in the sense of conscious experience or meaning). Nothing in the natural sciences themselves points to the existence of experience or consciousness – nothing, one might add in a Husserlian vein, save for the existence of the natural sciences themselves. This leads to the second way in which the problem may make itself visible. Natural science can not explain how experience or consciousness is born, because it has to assume that consciousness and experience exist (and likewise perception, observation and theory building), in the same way that it has to assume that causality, time and space exist. In this way, the science that we (after Husserl) may call naïve, is always even in principle mute with regard to the nature and birth of human experience and consciousness.

Naïve naturalism has a further negative consequence: it cuts natural science apart from other kinds of science, not to mention other types of culture. It is by no means clear that Husserl's solution to this problem of division, his transcendental phenomenology, would be the best way in which to investigate experience, while at the same time being open and critical. Husserl's idea was that consciousness has a universal structure that can be revealed by using a specific method or skill and that the knowledge attained through this method – the phenomenological method – is transcendental, that is, beyond the criticism of any and all other types of inquiry. The problem with Husserl's transcendentalism is analogous to the problem of naïve, hierarchical naturalism. Both views assume a basis, a foundation, which is beyond the criticism of any other type of experience. In naïve naturalism

the basis is the assumed nature as a collection of physical objects, in transcendentalism it is the assumption of human consciousness and knowledge concerning it.

The presupposition of some kind of foundation or starting point is, of course, necessary. Not all beliefs and claims can be put under scrutiny or criticised at the same time. Something has to be assumed if research is to be possible at all. One of the merits of Thomas Kuhn's famous philosophy of science has been an argument for the necessity of a background for any kind of scientific research. Being committed to what Kuhn (1962) calls a paradigm is not only necessary but also rational. New knowledge can be produced only if one is willing to take the risk of assuming something that in effect can later be shown to be false. However, the problem of naïve naturalism and transcendentalism is that their presuppositions shut out areas of inquiry that they themselves consider important. For instance, a naturalist is fond of claiming that natural science is more rational and justified than any other way of organising experience. However, at the same time, a consistent naturalist has to contend that no reason or ground for justification has ever been found in our observations of nature. Transcendentalism, on the other hand, solves the problem of naïveté by referring to the a priori certainties of reason. Thus both naïve naturalism and transcendentalism blindfold themselves and fall short of the ideal of being critical.

The lack of critique in these views is connected to their notion of the unidirectionality of critique. According to (naïve) naturalism, all scientific claims can and must be criticised on the basis of observations of nature. However, the presupposition that a nature exists and that it can be observed – the presuppositions that make naturalism possible – are beyond all critique, be that philosophical, religious, artistic or, indeed, scientific. In this way, naïve naturalism falls short of the goals of openness and criticality. It brackets out a particular area of experience and states that claims about that area can not be questioned by



using the methods or means of any other system of experience and theory. In this view, critique is unidirectional in that it is directed from this foundation outwards. At the same time, the unidirectionality of critique implies that different areas of experience are not equal, they can not engage in a democratic discussion. This anti-democracy, however, is not argued for in a scientific or philosophical way, and it does not match very well with our everyday experience of how knowledge, skills and lives evolve.

### 2.1.2 Democracy of Experiences to the Rescue

How are we to carve out for artistic research a place that would simultaneously fulfil the conditions of openness and self-criticism or self-reflectivity and be able to talk about meaningful human experience? That is, how can the criteria of "research" and "experientiality" be upheld at the same time?

The ideals of openness and criticality can be interpreted in ways that do not make critique something unidirectional. Not all naturalism is naïve, and not all philosophy transcendental. Non-naïve naturalism and non-transcendental phenomenology could come together in a view that may be labelled *experiential democracy* or *democracy of experiences*. The democracy of experiences is defined as a view where no area of experience is in principle outside the critical reach of any other area of experience. The view could also be called *daimocracy*, if we widen Socrates' classic view, according to which an inner voice called *daimon* steers the path of a person.<sup>3</sup> So let us call "*daimons*" all of the more or less distinct areas of experience that can more or less separately inform us, such as the "experience of art" or "artistic experience" and "scientific

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 3 Socrates mentions his *daimon* in several of Plato's dialogues, for instance, in *Apology*, 31d-e.

experience", respectively. The idea in the democracy of experiences, or "daimocracy", is quite simple: art (or artistic experience) can criticize science (or scientific experience), not to mention the possibilities of intra-artistic or intra-scientific criticism. In this sense, experiential democracy is co-terminus with the multi-directionality of criticism.

In this way, we get a new interpretation of the criterion of (scientific) openness. We can define (epistemological) minimal openness as follows: a (epistemological) view is (minimally) open if, according to it, it is in principle possible to question and criticize any and all forms or areas of experience from the point of view of any other area or form of experience. This would mean, as we saw above, that art is free to criticize science, philosophy to criticize religion, religion to criticize science, and so on. It would also mean that there are no first philosophies or metaphysics that can not, in principle, be touched by empirical criticism (nor any scientific truths that could not be challenged by 'pure philosophy', or poetical understandings of being that could not be criticized by natural science, for that matter). Consequently, the criterion of openness does not apply only to individuals ("in principle, anyone can do science and there are no unquestioned authorities"). Rather, it is generalized: in principle, any area of experience can challenge any other area, and there are no fundamental hierarchies among fields or types of experience.<sup>4</sup>

Something like a democracy of experiences can be read in one of Paul Feyerabend's (1999, 33) dictums, according to which "every culture is possibly all cultures". Feyerabend wants to emphasise that there

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 4 The idea of democracy among experiences fits nicely with the views of experience presented by John Dewey (e.g., in Dewey 1958; see also Dewey & Bentley 1976, 69: "Our own procedure is the transactional, in which it is asserted the right to see together, extensionally and durationally, much that is talked about conventionally as if it were composed of irreconcilable separates.") and Georges Bataille (1988).

are no authentic forms of culture, if by authentic we mean something unquestionable or something not in need of justification. Analogously, there are no forms of experience that could not be questioned or that should go without justification. Thus, we can reformulate a maxim for a democracy of experiences: every experience is potentially all experiences. This is the "ontological" basis of a democracy of experiences. However, it is important to remember that *potentiality* does not entail *actuality*. Every experience is potentially all experiences, but the realisation of that potential might be historically closed, beyond a barrier of tradition that is insurmountable, at least during our lifetimes. Again, the criticality of research can provide an opening from such an impasse. Absolute universality is an illusion, but scientific research can, as a shared practice, create a justified commonality and a self-conscious tradition. Doing research is in itself a way of producing intersubjectivity with regard to an area of experience that has been void of ways of communicating in a shared language. An inquiry is not only positioned as a part of a tradition, but also points to new intersubjectively accessible experiences and their conceptualisations. At the same time, an inquiry lets other intersubjectivities and conceptualisations go unnoticed, marginalised, if not be covered up. This fact further emphasises the ethical dimension of practice-based research that we will have to return to.

A democracy of experiences also implies that a hierarchical picture of the sciences or the prioritised status of any one science becomes impossible to uphold. If all areas of experience can in principle be criticised, the falsifiability of the testability of claims in natural science does not guarantee that they are any more reliable than the claims made about other areas of experience. The reliability of claims in the social sciences and humanities are attained in ways other than those of the natural sciences. However, there exists no evidence to show that the criticality or openness of natural science would be greater than the openness and criticality of other types of research – no evidence that is independent

of the natural sciences themselves, that is. On the contrary, we know, at least from the critiques of Husserl and others, that there are serious reasons for thinking that the unidirectionality of critique in the natural sciences has produced severe problems that go deeper than the possible mistakes included in empirically corroborated theory.

A standard answer to these critical points goes, of course, that natural science, with all its presuppositions, has made possible the unprecedented advances in technology during the last centuries. This may be true, up to a point. However, these achievements owe something to other disciplines, as well. When we think about a field like medicine, it is obvious that natural science has contributed in a major way to its advancement. At the same time, it is clear that medical skills, the handicraft part of it, as well as social arrangements and even ethical thinking has contributed, as well. Experiential democracy may be a necessary ingredient of any successful practice.

Here we have to ask more precise questions about the positive achievements of natural science: how much (and which parts) of the achievements of natural science are dependent on the naïve presuppositions, and, accordingly, how much (and which parts) on its negative consequences? It is by no means clear how this balance is to be drawn. In any case, if the presupposition according to which nature is composed of physical objects is not necessary – and physical theory itself seems to be telling us this – then the presupposition of the unidirectionality of critique might be superfluous, too. In addition, if that presupposition is not necessary for the good effects of natural science, and is contributing to some of its least desirable consequences, there is even less need to be suspicious about the non-hierarchicalness and increased openness produced through its removal. The progress of science – when it is, indeed, progress – can hardly be dependent on the unidirectionality of criticism. On the contrary: there is reason to believe that multidirectional criticism works better. One of the strongest arguments for this is "pessimistic meta-induction based on fashion".

Imagine how ridiculous the clothing fashion of 20 years ago looks today. Yet, it is hard to see what fashionable clothing used today will be just as laughable in another 20 years. Now it is clear that social norms, including the paradigmatic criteria of science, suffer from similar fashions and myth-making. That is why innovation more often than not requires an open mind, a brain that is not afraid of going in any direction. Tolerance and multi-directionality of critique go together; they are the cornerstones of experiential democracy.

In this very general sense, we hope that the idea of a democracy of experiences may help to produce an atmosphere where the knowledge situated and embedded in artistic practices can be "insurrected" in the sense described by Michel Foucault (see, e.g., 2003, 8–9). There is no reason to beat about the bush: in many ways, the information produced by artistic work has been the underdog in relation to scientific expertise and the truth produced by it. The strengthening of mature research can thus be one way to better recognise and acknowledge the importance of areas of non-scientific knowledge, and at the same time gain a better idea of the genealogy of scientific research.

### 2.1.3 What is scientific maturity?

The equality of the different fields of science and the wider experiential democracy that goes with it can be felt as threatening to the ideals of openness and criticalness, when understood in a particular way. Even Thomas Kuhn, whose philosophy of science has forcibly shaken the view of science as an entity with an essence and a direction, has written that the natural sciences are more mature than the social sciences, because in the natural sciences the research community converges around one shared paradigm (Kuhn 2000). The paradigms of natural science seldom change through dramatic upheavals, known as revolutions, in which the growth of science is, according to Kuhn, not cumulative. But outside the revolutions, natural science is driven on the basis of one paradigm, and this single-paradigm nature of the

sciences makes the cumulation of knowledge possible – until the next revolution. In comparison, the social sciences are always in a state of tumult, in a state of revolution and non-cumulation, where different paradigms attack each other. No paradigm gets the upper hand for a long enough period of time, and the cumulation of knowledge is impossible. The state of the social sciences is one of a continuous criticism of the very basis of research, unlike in the natural sciences. This, according to Kuhn, is a sign of the immaturity and, in a sense, the unreliability of the social sciences. Kuhn (2000, 222) writes that the social sciences are "limited" to interpretation.

However, from the point of view of experiential democracy, one has to ask why the fact that a research community is attached to one paradigm would be a sign of maturity? Could it not be rather that the existence of a multitude of openly critical paradigms promotes both openness and criticality? It is not clear that the "non-progress" displayed by the social sciences is produced by the fact that the researchers in the field have spent most of their time in internal struggles. Even if that was the case, it could still be possible that the time spent in internal criticism would be a sign of maturity, a sign of time well spent in the service of rationality and emancipation. At least from the point of view of democracy and tolerance, time spent in paradigm-rivalry might be rational. It might be more in line with the ideals of openness and criticality to have a multiplicity of rival paradigms than extended periods of research with only one paradigm. To strive for one paradigm only might be fruitful in some cases. As a methodological rule, the demand of "one paradigm" would, however, be counterproductive. The current situation in physics is a good example, in that the paradigms of doing the three types of physics – classical, quantum and relativity – are related in a family-resemblance rather than unifiable in a single paradigm. Would it be a sign of maturity to insist on only one paradigm in physics today? That is very doubtful. Moreover, quantum theory has led the way in physics towards a more symbolical, if not interpretative, way of research.

188 If we think that scientific research should be equal with respect to other areas of human culture, and if we think that they should be open to criticism from each other, then there is even more reason to think that an abundance of theories, interpretations and paradigms is a sign of maturity, and the adherence to a single paradigm possibly a limitation. The maturity of science, and of the scientific world-view in general, requires that we recognise the fact that science itself has several different goals and aims. These goals and aims might even be contradictory at various times or in some degree. To deny this one needs to constrain one's view of science into a caricature, an unearthly and unhealthy fiction. The worry over the unidirectionality of science and scientific critique is, of course, in part a worry over the special status and authority that science enjoys in our societies. This privileged status, in turn, is dependent on the ideals of openness and criticality. However, openness and criticality are not the same thing as unidirectionality or single paradigms. If science were to embrace something like experiential democracy, its status in the world might not be quite the status of the unidirectional and naively naturalist science, but it might show more openness, self-criticism and tolerance – in a word, maturity.

## 2.2 Metaphor Two: Methodological Abundance

We saw above how the self-understanding of science was for a large part of the 19th century governed by the idea that science is special because of the scientific method. This method supposedly provides the demarcation between science and other fields of research or experience. Correspondingly, it has been thought that specific scientific disciplines have their own methods, or at least a catalogue of methods, that are particularly well suited to the field in question and thus, in part, define it and set it apart from neighbouring disciplines. How-

ever, in the general case, defining what this scientific method precisely *is* has been proven to be a tall order. Any definition is riddled with historical counter examples, as well as theoretical problems. On a more concrete level, the scientific practices and methods of the human and social sciences in particular have seen a wide expansion, as new methods and approaches have constantly been innovated. Even physics, which in some sense is methodologically very conservative, has seen substantial methodological change in the last 100 years with the advent of new mathematical concepts, computer models, and philosophical interpretations. As a consequence, the idea of something like methodological anarchism or methodological abundance does not seem as far fetched as previous. It is our claim here that in the case of artistic research methodological abundance is a particularly fruitful productive approach.

This claim is based on the idea that experience plays a special and central role in artistic research. In a nutshell: artistic research is a way in which experience reflectively changes itself. Moreover, in the spirit of the democracy of experiences, all areas of experience are at play in this circular or spiral movement, in the hermeneutic of (artistic) experience. These areas of experience might include experiences that do not lend themselves to easy conceptualization, at least not if conceptualization is understood in terms of sufficient and necessary conditions. Consequently, the privileged form of writing and reporting research results, a scientific thesis (such as a doctoral dissertation), has to be approached with a particular emphasis and methodological attention. Writing, as a way of thinking, doing research and reporting it, has to find a way of treating language in a pluralist manner, so that the uniqueness of artistic experience is not lost when our thinking about it is communicated.



### 2.2.1 Methodological over-abundance and anarchy

The concept of abundance comes from Feyerabend (1999). According to him, the world is too diverse to be reduced to a single method or even a single philosophy of science viewpoint. Behind the methodological abundance are also the political upheavals that have occurred in the real world, or the so-called risk society, and what one could call the war and catastrophe-proneness of Western nation states.

In his magnum opus, *Against Method* (1975), Feyerabend argues that the world is so diverse, chaotic and surprising that the belief in one all-powerful and all-encompassing method is nothing more than self-delusion. According to Feyerabend, it does not follow from the richness of existence that methodological thinking should not be exercised or different methods used in order to achieve richness and to simplify things. The aim is, rather, to show and understand that all abstract structures – methods, including methodologies – have their limits and limitations. The richness of the features of reality is not organised according to beautiful models but requires, according to Feyerabend, an anarchistic starting point: "Anarchism, while perhaps not the most attractive political philosophy, is certainly excellent medicine for epistemology and for the philosophy of science" (ibid., 9).

It is worthwhile noting that Feyerabend's audience includes not only philosophers of science but also, moreover, natural scientists. The frozen methods or theories about rationality are based on a reductionist view of man and her relationship with the world. Therefore, the only principle that can be defended under all circumstances is "anything goes". Anything goes, yet anything that goes also leaves a trace and makes a shadow. The actors come from somewhere and end up somewhere, continuously enjoying the pressure imposed by the horizons of the past, present and future. In other words, anything is possible, but not everything possible is meaningful. Nevertheless, it is important to defend the idea that all methods and ways of perception are in their basic premise possible and nothing is excluded when aiming to under-

stand the world. This is also because in order for science to become a mature part of democratic society it is necessary for it to recognise its own ambiguity.

So why, then, does Feyerabend bother to overturn our belief in methodologies? In his autobiography *Killing Time* (1994, 179), he has explained his motives as follows: "One of my motives for writing *Against Method* was to free people from the tyranny of philosophical obfuscators and abstract concepts such as 'truth', 'reality', or 'objectivity', which narrow people's vision and ways of being in the world." A second motive is the concern for scientific change, that which (having one direction and one goal) is called progress. Feyerabend, like many other post-60s philosophers of science, claims that following one method leads to a standstill in science, no matter what the discipline in question.

Here it is worth inserting a small biographical diversion, conveying the message of a person who did not lack a sense of humour and who understood what enjoyment and pleasure meant. Feyerabend (1924–1994) tells how he had wanted to study astronomy as well as acting and singing and to practise all three professionally simultaneously (Feyerabend 1994, 252). His dream was to tour the international stages and live the good life in his penthouse apartments scattered around the world. Feyerabend never became a singer, but in a way part of one of his wishes came true, in becoming a university professor with the possibility to travel and live in the metropolises of the world. It is easy to see from the following quote that Feyerabend's goal was an open text, one could even say a divergent text, one which not only informs but also is a conscious and reflective action and, in the best case, speaks to us at the scale of pleasure:

"Writing has become a very pleasurable activity, almost like composing a work of art. There is some overall pattern, very vague at first, but sufficiently well-defined to provide me with a starting point. Then come the details – arranging the words in sentences and paragraphs. I choose my words very carefully – they must sound right, must have

the right rhythm, and their meaning must be slightly off-centre; nothing dulls the mind so thoroughly as a sequence of familiar notions. Then comes the story. It should be interesting and comprehensible, and it should have some unusual twists. I avoid 'systematic' analysis: the elements hang together beautifully, but the argument itself is from outer space, as it were, unless it is connected with the lives and interests of individuals or special groups. Of course, it is already so connected, otherwise it would not be understood, but the connection is concealed, which means that strictly speaking, a 'systematic' analysis is a fraud. So why not avoid the fraud by using stories right away?" (Feyerabend 1999, vii).

get In the preface to the posthumously-published book *Conquest of Abundance. A Tale of Abstraction Versus the Richness of Being* (1999) Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Feyerabend's fourth wife, mentions that the unfinished work was for her husband a work that was close to his heart for many years. She writes: "He kept working at it for years, reading an immense variety of material, weaving stories and arguments, paying attention to form and style. He very much wanted the book to be pleasant to read, more a piece of craft than an intellectual product." Bert Terpstra, the book's editor, in turn writes that during the editing work he came to understand the worldview according to Feyerabend: "In place of a 'frozen', material universe, I could perceive an open and changeable reality, and I became able to see, and thus I was liberated from, all sorts of fixed ideas about 'the way things are'."

The idea of the "abundance of reality", developed and emphasised continuously by Feyerabend, belongs to a tradition of thought, according to which the research objects in the human sciences – Feyerabend would undoubtedly also add the natural sciences – are constructed by writing about them rather than first discovering them and then writing about them. Writing is simultaneously thinking and doing, both observing the world and creating it. All in all, the present state of academic writing seems to be that some people publish reports in

the manner of physicists, others write in a more essayistic style, even calling their texts "scientific prose", while the research of others again resembles more a biography or novel.

Let it be said, just to be sure, that the thought we want to defend by referring to Feyerabend's ideas does not prohibit writing about the existence of an external reality. Instead, the emphasis lies in writing itself as one of the forms in which reality is created. It is true that at its worst the rat of realism can bite; and thus arises the illusion of the sovereign supremacy of a particular language or presentational system. Not even realism, however, needs to be one-sided and dogmatic, as indeed many 20th-century philosophical and artistic schools of thought have shown.

When discussing artistic research, it is important to emphasise that there are ways of perceiving the world other than writing, which is based on the use of language – not least the rich formal languages of music and the wondrous sensations they produce. Feyerabend (1999, 268) argues: "Our surroundings, the entire physical universe included, are not simply given. They respond to our actions and ideas. Theories and principles must therefore be used with care. Most of them exclude specifics and personal matters; speaking bluntly (though not untruthfully), we can say that they are superficial and inhumane."

In this sense, Feyerabend is, like Dewey and Marx, an Aristotelian thinker, for whom the measure of reality is a well-functioning human practice (Feyerabend 1999, 266), which can be created when several parties interact, begin to exchange thoughts and to trust one another. Wise human practices are not created if methodology is perceived as a policing activity, or if politics is perceived as an expert-substantiated lack of alternatives, or if art is perceived as territorial marking.

### 2.2.2 Experience and art

Experiential democracy and the abundance of theories and paradigms are well suited as a background to practice-based research for at least two reasons. The methods of natural science can not be used, for the very simple reason that the methods *expressis verbis* bracket out the thing that is studied in practice-based research, namely the experience of the artist, and the skilful conduct of the practitioner. Therefore, first, practice-based research needs access to experience in all its variety. Laborative or observed nature does not, even in principle, grant such an access, neither does the transcendental structure of reason. Second, the role of practice-based research in the wider artistic and scientific community demands that it, in a self-reflective and self-critical way, is aware of its own grounds and possibilities. Practice-based research, especially in the arts, has to take the existence of experience and consciousness seriously, even the existence of experience that does not live under the laborative lens. Furthermore, practice-based research has to take into account the possibility that it has a wider than academic effect, even when theoretical, practice-based research in the arts has an effect on future artistic experience, be it individual or collective. Practice-based research in the arts can not presume that it is neutral with regard to artistic practices or skills.

Practice-based research can not rely on the interpretations of either naturalism or transcendentalism, since it has to discuss forms of experience outside their reach. In naturalism, experience is structured by constructing artificial environments and by controlling the parameters of that environment. In an experiential setting, the environment (the laboratory) is controlled as precisely as possible, so that the repetition of the experiment becomes possible. Furthermore, the observations are expressed in an abstract form: the mathematical expressions are not intended to capture the experience in its specificity, but the phenomenon in its generality. The formalism describes the phenomenon *in abstracto*, not this or that experience in their concrete "thisness", *haecceity*. The

experimental setting is created for repeatability and against the richness of experience. The areas of experience thus created can be controlled, repeated, quantified, and manipulated. A kind of openness and criticality ensues: the repeatability of the experiments guarantee that in principle anyone can at will repeat them by trusting in observation only.

The repeatability at will and maximal control of the environment required by naturalist science can not characterise the research in the social sciences or the arts, not least because those fields are, by definition, dealing with something irrepeatable and possibly unique. The phenomena of culture, such as artistic practices or works of art, can not be purified of all of their specific properties: potentially, all the specific shades of meaning are important. Furthermore, these phenomena can not always be analysed into parts or repeated at will. Consequently, practice-based research in the arts has to attain an ideal of openness and criticality by other means. Experience as such has to be conceptualised in ways that are not in use in the natural sciences. Experientiality, openness, the possibility of sharing and communicating an artistic skill are not the same as the universality of facts in the natural sciences. Experience can be shared or common in ways that bypass the at-will repeatability of laborative observation. As was noted above, parts of natural science have also had to let go of the requirements of repeatability and predictability.

Experience includes parts that are neither observation nor perception. Experience in general is a continuum from the indistinct and flux-like torrent to the clear and precise structure of reasoning or controlled observation. The flux-like end of the continuum does not support a subject-object-distinction, an observer-observed distinction. This non-distinction is a good sign for practice-based research in the arts, since questions about the nature of the subject, the object, observation, individuation and so forth may be at the centre of artistic practices, skills and research. Therefore, it is good for practice-based research in the arts not to get tied into methodological views that in-



clude a decisive and absolute distinction between the (experiencing) subject and the (observed) object as a condition of inquiry. To make such an assumption would be uncritical.

The continuum of experience has to be approached in a way that is thoroughly hermeneutical: in practice-based research experience looks at experience and thereby produces new experience. This is the basic assumption underlying something like experiential democracy. In research, experience looks at itself in a circular way, thereby also reorganising itself. The ways of reorganising are the methods, and there are as many methods as there are types of experiential change. In principle, no area of experience is left out of the loop: not in principle, but in practice, of course, this happens where one has to choose some sort of starting points for the research. Everything in experience may, in principle, be scrutinized and reorganised, but not at the same time, and not at will. Through this approach, the ideals of openness and criticality are realized in new ways. The crucial question for the necessary criticality is how to conceptualise experience in its hermeneutical nature.

That experience is hermeneutical through and through raises not only questions of validity for the interpretation, but also for recognising that interpretations are not final, that experience has no end or ground and that, therefore, constant criticism is the only way to go forward. The hermeneutic circle starts from the given interpretation of the phenomenon to be investigated. The received view, the prominent interpretation, is the starting point, and the first task is to doubt and criticise this interpretation that always already is there. In the spirit of experiential democracy, this criticism can be directed to any direction: the objectives of the research give a clue regarding the best direction to be taken. Thus, the scientific ideal of being critical means in the context of experiential democracy a multi-directionality of criticism, methodological pluralism, and the admittance of the groundlessness and circularity of experience (taken together, these desiderata imply the recognition of the ethical dimension of hermeneutical research).

### 2.2.3 Experience and Language

In this context, language has to be understood in a wide sense, including meaning-giving activities beyond the spoken or written word. The openness of practice-based research may, in fact, demand ways of expression that are not exclusively propositional. This kind of research concerns skills and practices that can be criticised precisely enough only in the skills and practices themselves. The self-reflective reorganisation of the skill can be communicated and effected using the language of the skill itself, especially when constructed through the intersubjectivity and conceptual framework of research. The role of non-propositional expression does not necessarily mean a diminution of intersubjectivity, since the language of the skill might, in fact, be more open to the relevant community. This does, of course, mean that expression can not be an "individual creation", but rather a commentary, a criticism of the common and collective tradition.

The ideal of openness is achieved by making explicit the relationship between theoretical experience and artistic experience; the relationship has to be methodologically justified. Openness does not rely on the presupposition of universality, but has to actively strive for increased intersubjectivity. For instance, when doing research on a phenomenon that does not permit a clear and distinct subject-object distinction (such as quantum mechanical phenomena, learning a first language, falling in love, forgetting, etc.), the research itself can not be expressed in ways that are at the same time conceptually consistent and complete (a comparison to quantum mechanics is, once again, intriguing). The language has to be open, critical and intersubjective, not universal or complete. This is yet another methodological requirement arising from the self-reflectivity of hermeneutical research: one can not insist that the theoretical description and language must include conceptual categories and tools that destroy the experience they are about.

For practice-based research, the problem with language is to avoid the pitfalls of introversion, of hermetical traditions (including solipsistic individualism), and of uncritical repetition. Hermetic introversion is

avoided by being well acquainted with the tradition of the field one is working in, and by making clear why the research is relevant to the community. Uncritical repetition can be counteracted by the same means, as well as by not accepting the traditional, given interpretation. Being unhistorical is being uncritical, being repetitive is being unscientific.

The traditional interpretation can be questioned and the position of one's own research can often be shown in more precise terms by using non-propositional expressions. It is clear that visual representations, models, graphs, and so on have a high cognitive value when it comes to natural science. Furthermore, it is clear that the skill of visual knowledge presentation can be intersubjectively reviewed and developed. Therefore it should come as no big surprise that with regards to, for instance, artistic skills of the visual kind, a visual presentation of claims, even claims having a conceptual bearing, can be best done in a visual medium. The major difference in comparison to visualizations and the like in the natural sciences is that in practice-based research the point is not only to illustrate or represent pre-existing propositional knowledge, but to unveil and criticize non-propositional conventions and skills by using the medium itself.<sup>5</sup>

At the same level of language, however, one must see to it that the connection from artistic research to experience and its uniqueness does not disappear. If one wants to preserve the uniqueness of experience one must give up the aim of bringing experience under universal

5 As an example of research in which the non-propositional expression works in open and critical ways, one can mention Juha Suonpää's PhD dissertation *Petokuvien raadollisuus* ("The wretchedness of the image of the predatory animal, 2002). Suonpää discusses the impasse that natural photography faces if it relies solely on notions and definitions of "authenticity". The text of Suonpää's dissertation analyses the discourse on nature photography, while the photographs included in the book show how the traditions of nature photography can be criticized and its limits overstepped in photography itself.

commensurability and thus generally applicable for all people at all times. Any experience that can be arbitrarily repeated by anyone is no longer a unique experience. Thus, studying the unique experience is always inevitably anti-universal, local and case-relative. The universalities become commonalities, not for everybody at all times, but for each of us now, in this particular case. One must take seriously the possibility that the areas of knowledge, experience and research are in principle inter-subjective – they are, at least after a certain degree of effort, open to everyone who is willing and approachable – but they are not necessarily universal (see Vadén & Hannula 2003 with regards to such particularism and localism).

For instance, by following such philosophers as Richard Rorty and Alasdair MacIntyre, we can get to grips with very important viewpoints that criticise both universality and a rationality defined as generally applicable; that is, with ideas which are interlinked in a very essential way with the background and opportunities of artistic research. In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) Rorty shows that philosophy, no matter what approach it takes, does not have an independent and neutral reference relationship. In other words, philosophy can not offer an ultimate certainty and means of solving disputes and claims – unlike what many people still sincerely would like to believe. Philosophers appeal to the elements and rules of their own language games, very rarely looking beyond these limits and limitations. The result is not one truth or certainty but a mishmash of different versions of reality competing with one another; a situation for which there is no solution other than linguistic arguments, and claims that can never guarantee the desired end result. Meaningful interaction, however, necessarily requires that the claims in each case are openly and transparently located and localised. The importance of MacIntyre, on the other hand, is evident in the critique of rationality. MacIntyre (1988) explains in detail how the concept of rationality is anything but obvious or neutral. Rationality, just like any other central concept, can be

strongly traced back to the value world supported by each version of reality. It can not be perceived without an interpretation of justice, and it is not meaningful without a clearly demarcated temporal and local context. Nevertheless, according to MacIntyre, this does not lead to relativism but to the acceptance that each tradition itself justifies its own deeds and values. It is particularly important to note that despite this, it is possible, desirable and sometimes even obligatory to compare different traditions and versions of reality. The criteria in use in each case, however, are always value-laden. The question is, yet again, about the ability to both believe in one's own starting points and understand them through comparisons and debates, as well as to create sufficient critical distance from them.

### 2.3 Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Ethical Encounters

It is clear that if and when research has its background in treating all areas of experience in a democratic way, questions of ethics become very prominent. Indeed, we contend that looking from a scientific-philosophical point of view there is a third alternative beyond petrified objectivism and toothless relativism: ethically-aware scientific and artistic research. A research that is aware of its own starting points and goals and has a critical view towards them, and which undertakes a debate also with other starting points without giving up its own or perceiving its own as superior, is the third and – so we would claim – most mature alternative for a theory of knowledge. In any case, recognising the ethical dimension and the conscious discussion about it is a necessary condition of scientific research.

Following Feyerabend's philosophy of science viewpoint, artistic research is encapsulated as a researching attitude, a question about what the relation of the researcher is to the object of the research. In

artistic research – and in no way do we want to exclude other areas of research either – the researcher seeks as openly as possible a relationship to the object of the research, with the aim of being aware of her own presuppositions, wishes, desires, interests and fears. Researching is thus an event that emerges relatively gradually, where one strives to perceive what and why the issues and things dealt within each case mean, and forcing the researcher to think who and where she is. This means also that the writer, researcher, listener and the one who experiences must have the courage to take a personal standpoint.

One should try to justify the viewpoint one is presenting. The multitude of interpretations and methods must not refer to anything beyond the interpretation and plurality. To quote a Finnish sociologist, Antti Eskola: "At the finishing line [the researcher] must have the courage to tell who, in her opinion, has won." (Eskola & Kurki, 2004, 223). The competition metaphor is perhaps not the best image for doing research, nor for seeking the truth, but the message is clear: the (artistic) researcher must present a substantiated viewpoint, which inevitably is contradictory and in a polemical relationship to other viewpoints.

But no interpretation or choice can ever be justified if one can not admit from what basis and with what needs and suppositions the interpretation is made. Natural science or philosophy, not to mention artistic research, can not be made from some God-like point of view. Therefore, one's own angle on the research object must be recognised and explained, and thus brought to the unfolding reality.

A part of the interpretational nature of artistic research is that it becomes possible only when it can turn out to be boring, stupid and delusional – in other words, bad and unsuccessful. There is also a risk linked with interpretability, a risk that one must take. Without the risk any interpretation will remain floating, sometimes even grandly so, but still nevertheless without a touching point with the world. Research is then neither ethical nor localised. It is not any-

thing that one would take seriously. To quote Gianni Vattimo (1999): "The interpretation is characterised by its particular indecisiveness, which at the same time is the undefined opening up of the researchers towards abundance and failure." Arriving at the same point from another direction, Kuhn (1962) pointed out that the price of scientific discovery is the risk of being wrong. The question is ultimately about the researcher's duty to take a standpoint and present a substantiated view of the research object, whether it be the artists' own work or something else.

There is a story about the etymology and meaning of the word "ethics" which well describes the meaning of the localness, interpretability and encounter for the Aristotelian good practice. It has been claimed that Homer used the word *ethos* to describe something that in Finnish can be called "elinpiiri" ("circle of life"), that is, a territory or habitat. *Ethos* is the area of interest and meaning which is defined by a particular way of human existence. It includes age, social position, sexual habits, ways of thinking – the whole palette of human existence. For instance, the *ethos* of a shepherd consists of sheep, the pastures, seasons, dew on the grass, the threat of wolves, etc., but particularly the birth of these concrete conditions of life, their coming together as understandable and functioning entities and good practices. The need for ethical considerations and justifications materialises because we are not all shepherds. Some soldiers wanting to cross the pasture have a very different *ethos*, aims, goals and way of seeing the world and assessing what is meaningful to them. The encounter of these two habitats, two different *ethoses*, creates a new third *ethos*, a habitat where the different *ethoses* of the shepherd and the soldier meet. The shepherd can no longer imagine that everybody lives as she does, her habitat no longer consists only of the life of a shepherd but also – possibly even reluctantly – the life of a soldier and his goals. Correspondingly, the soldier notices, in one way or another, the existence of the shepherd and the options afforded by it.

Through these two localities there is a state of shared experience, which is a third shared locality. This third place is the area of ethics (see Hannula 2001, Vadén & Hannula 2003, chapter 5). The third place offers the opportunity for listening, being next to and *being-with* and then also criticising. It is a question of tolerance and hospitality, but not *being-for* in one direction or another.

The first stage "ethics", in other words the commitment to one's own habitat and its formations and the frustration due to the difference of others, is not really ethics at all. Ethics, questioning, and justification only start in the second stage, when one's own *ethos* is challenged in the encounters with other *ethoses*. As a second stage phenomenon, ethics has its beginning and end in abundance.

Despite the ancient nature of the story, it is in fact a more recent one. We believe that this is the very thing that Zygmunt Bauman (1995) referred to when he spoke about postmodern morality at the individual level. She, the person we call an individual, a person who participates, not alone but always together as a part and party in a particular community, has awoken. She has become aware of the changed situation, which does not dissolve into relativism, but where finally personal responsibility and freedom are touched. And so too morality, which is full of difficult choices; choices nevertheless that cannot be avoided and from which one cannot hide behind secure answers. The only consolation in making these choices is that nobody makes them alone, but is always a part of a certain background, tradition and context.

Following Rorty (1991), the question indeed is: what communities and traditions does the person undertaking artistic research actively want to belong to? The sad thing is that sometimes we are happy with the context where we find ourselves – and yet again sometimes not. The politics of the everyday – and how we can cope with it – is how we specifically handle this conflict. But Rorty continues. The other decisive question is: What is our approach to loneliness? We can not



underestimate or despise such a question. It is useless to claim that one would enjoy one's existence maximally only if and when one is alone. Despite the journey and need to make decisions, the question is about being in the world, about the pressures and needs stemming from this and how this relationship is carried out.

### 2.3.1 Ethical encounters

Artistic research defined as a democracy of experiences demands numerous varied, challenging and experimental encounters, where the different parties can encounter each other reciprocally. The content and nuances of the encounter are created along the way: in the searches, while searching, when recounting, when listening, when clashing, when facing each other eye-to-eye, flesh-in-flesh. Leaning on the Aristotelian tradition, the good life is the search for the good life. Such a claim is not a tautology. On the contrary, it only takes for real (and admits) that the substance of the good life – or the third place – must be continuously created and repeatedly characterised, based on choices that continuously lunge at, or sneak upon, us. This is the politics of the everyday, where the self-image and view of the world of the actors – the being-in-the-world – is slowly formed.

The encounter occurring in artistic research must always be a little bit faltering, assailing essence and localisation. The faltering is in any research natural and a part of the research process itself. Even though the end result is unknown, the attitude and method through which research is carried out does not have to be ambiguous. The person undertaking the journey knows what she is doing. There is no reason to doubt the process itself – or at least there is no reason to apologise. Instead, the sleepy space opening up ahead must be taken possession of, and one must participate in the shaping of that space and place. Curiously and attentively. By being awake.

The everyday – its stifling, oppressing and redeeming presence – is needed for the encounter. And so, too, a sense of proportion and courage. Searching for an encounter, the untangling and developing, is an attitude. It is convinced, trusting. It is able to laugh at itself in its self-confidence, and to question its own starting point. It is never insolent or rude, though nevertheless undeniably slightly childish or over-keen and always busy, and ready to receive by listening and comparing.

For the sake of simplicity and economy of presentation, we can re-name the parties of the encounter with the boring but adequately ordinary pseudonyms A and B. Before the encounter, A and B are in a situation that they can not or do not want to escape. They can be in the same situation and in one way or another in the same space. A and B might know each another, or come from the same small town. On the other hand, it is very possible that A and B have never previously exchanged a word and only now meet face to face for the first time. A and B can, in other words, be from different parts of the same country or continent or from different cardinal directions. These details are important yet external to the basic principle itself, which, we claim, is meaningful in all encounters and in the perception of any type, shape or way of being together. A and B thus are figuratively speaking face to face. They do not yet meet but are aware that in one way or another they must live in the same space and situation. Putting things in proportion, making contacts, zigzagging and contacting begins.

In the background is always (in practice) a misunderstanding, the impossibility of putting oneself completely into the thoughts or ethos of someone else. You can not but misunderstand, and therefore the question is not really about understanding, but about the relationship between A and B, about what they achieve, and what kind of relationship they are able to form. The most important prerequisite is accepting that one must not try to understand the other one forcibly, thus trying to rule and control. It similarly follows that we neither understand nor control even half-completely ourselves – our desires, needs, wishes and anxieties.

In this sense, our view of ethical encounters and cross-cultural communication is dialectical and Hegelian rather than idealized and Habermasian.<sup>6</sup> In the Habermasian tradition, cross-cultural understanding is made possible by a shared universal goal (successful communication, rationality), and contains always the epistemological problem of not being certain if A has understood B correctly. In the Hegelian tradition, on the other hand, the basic situation is characterised by an ontological misunderstanding: A does not fully understand herself, and neither does B. But it is this ontological impossibility and impurity that makes the dialectical and open process of cross-cultural communication possible: particular epistemological processes of (mis)understanding are made possible by the shared ontological misunderstanding. To put it bluntly: A and B might want to try to (mis)understand each other, because they are not ready or complete.

On the journey itself what is essential is that one dares to free oneself from the already known tried and tested ways of perceiving oneself and one's relationship to the surroundings. It is a question of opening up slightly, activating viewpoints and the view of the world. It can not, and it must not, mean leaving behind all that one has learnt and all that one believes in, but rather a constructive detachment, a distancing and a courage to move from certainty to uncertainty; that is, to such a situation where you know roughly the direction of your journey but at the same time, nevertheless, you can not be certain where your journey will take you. A and B dare to take a risk. They step in to unknown territory; their movement has been filled with open, flexible suppositions. Both have to sense or guess that the chosen direction could be the right and meaningful one. Still, there is no certainty about it. By using a story as a crutch, A and B are clear about what kind of story framework they have

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6 Here we follow the description in Zizek (1997, 49).

proceeded into. The style and scene of the events are known. What exactly happens in the framework and that specific time and place is left completely open.

A and B are able to move away, to free themselves from the accustomed way of perceiving themselves and their surroundings. This displacement itself is already unbelievably difficult and demanding. It means that both A and B admit that it is possible that they are maybe incorrect in their assumptions after all, that their earlier viewpoints were perhaps incomplete, biased and even completely erroneous, and that their ethos is not the only one available. Admitting this is a strange yet essential task. It is a shove and a push, the power that makes room for the contacts and discussion between A and B, for comparisons and friendly teasing. A connection is created, a launch-pad for a booster rocket, on top of which A and B seek a balance. But it is a precarious launch-pad; and to avoid falling off they have to seek the balance together. It is crude, everyday socialising, full of snags and annoyingly stuffy, where the inevitability of being together is already accepted. One need do no more than perceive those tools and methods, rules and social niceties of how being together is framed and sustained.

We speak, in other words, about a mutual understanding based on a common foundation. Through small and fumbling grips and strokes and with heaving stomachs, A and B can perceive basic issues that they share and think about in a similar way but about which they are not of the same opinion. It is a foundation that is continuously growing but does not, however, rise up into the clouds. The building is being built slowly, but the foundations give support and safety. Continuity is, in fact, the only thing that A and B have. In the best instance they experience the third locality, but it is not permanent. The mutual basic trust, the human factor, is permanent, more specified, and comparatively more permanent. There is a will and ability to respect the desires, needs and wishes of the other, so that one's own wishes and needs also are sufficiently acknowledged. Neither will probably ever get enough

attention, tenderness, esteem, jelly beans, compassion, respect and love. They will not at least get everything they want, but that is not the point. A very important role is played by the concept and attitude "good enough". It translates into a natural thought that you should not strive for perfection in anything you do, but that in relation to the circumstances the end result is adequate.

The same attitude concerns the shaping of the encounter. The basis for an encounter does not need to be a striving for "ideal communication" or a shared "universal rationality". One only needs a sufficient reason to strive towards "second choices" in the "third space". The area of ethics is not mine, nor is it yours. It is not the area of the first, inborn behaviour, but the shared, third area. At the same time, the ethical negotiations are not first choices but second choices. And finally, ethical second choices in the third area need "only" a sufficient reason.

The question of what is "sufficient" becomes crucial. We are inclined to follow Feyerabend (1999) in thinking that the grounds for this kind of cross-cultural claim-setting are often quite unprincipled and opportunistic, rather than the high-minded goals often presented by philosophers (such as coherence, consensus, rationality, and the like). This does not, however, mean that coherence or rationality would not be good goals, or that (minimal) openness would mean abandoning such criteria. Quite the contrary: it seems to us that the analysis of notions like experience, reason and justice presented by, for instance, John Dewey (1958) or Stuart Hampshire (2000) resonate very well with the idea of "sufficient" grounds for ethical encounters.

Perfectionism in itself can be worth striving for, if only it is connected with the individual herself. But perfectionism can be treacherous if and when it has a strongly limiting influence on habits and the opportunities to be together, to seek being together. One can take as an example the parties of almost any relationship. None of us can ever be a perfect father, mother, husband or wife, researcher or janitor. Even gazing at perfectionism can be blinding – the darkening of the

sun instead of the improvement of the lighting. Emphasis must be put on the word 'sufficient', which emphasises that the question is about practicality, the fact that the matter is dealt with and somehow keeps together, that one can live with the situation, and that later one must try to repair and develop it. One listens to oneself, one's surroundings, and fellow human beings. Before we even arrive at the port and the sea-view opening up from it, there are a few limitations and conditions connected to leaving on and surviving the ensuing sea journey. They will not make the boat itself easy to handle but at least perhaps more seaworthy and sturdy, gutsy and full of stamina. One's travel bag should therefore contain, apart from the ability to question, at least: 1) a consciousness about the fact that the other party must not be objectified, and 2) the knowledge that the relationship must take place slowly, by waiting, hanging around, lingering, letting the dust settle and the discharges dissipate, letting the clashes of the skirmishes and debates smoulder. If A and B cannot avoid treating each another as objects, or if one of them treats the other like an object, the encounter comes to nothing.

Bauman (1995, 63) equates avoiding objectification with an emotional attitude. This time emotionality takes us comparatively far, while at the same time placing several limitations upon us. One gets a grip on emotionality by changing one's opinions, and seeing what objectification in itself is and means. The object is treated like an object. It is instrumentalised in order to promote its user's goals. It is moved from one place to another, analysed, cut up, defined, measured, and categorised. Many things are done with it, but there is always one thing that remains. Nothing in all likelihood is asked from it. It is observed and used. In other words, avoiding objectification means that the parties must listen and give each other a chance, let the opinions and claims be and breath without them being stunted, banalized or glued to stereotypes and prejudices – in advance or during the process.



### 2.3.2 Openness, criticality and ethics: a methodological summary

It is not very productive to carry out artistic research in such a way that a person is first the artist who does the art and then becomes the researcher in order to study that artist. In this case the experience and skill of the artist does not direct the research in anything than subconscious and opaque ways. The doctrine of two worlds cuts through not only the research work but also the researcher. In this way of thinking, the artist is seen as a practical subject that later becomes the object of the researcher-subject. The researcher and the artist that is being researched could just as well be anybody else. From a methodological point of view, in the model of two works and two worlds it is only coincidental that the artist and researcher are one and the same person.

Research that has been needlessly divided into two can lead to distorted results. There are two alternatives. The first is that the artist and the scientist are the same person, and this issue is considered to have no effect. If this is the case, artistic research, which has both an 'artistic' and 'scientific' part, has not brought forth any additional value. The artist-researcher has only piled work on top of work, and in the worst case scenario has blurred the character of artistic research. In the second alternative, the fact that the artist and researcher exist in the same person is seen to have some meaning. If in this case the work is divided into two parts it leads to a methodological failure: there is no conscious thematization of the relationship between the artistic and scientific research. It is not seen as an organic part of research or interpreted from the point of view of the research object. In both instances, the methodological aim of artistic research has not been achieved. In other words, the artistic experience has not guided research openly and critically, nor has the artistic and scientific experience touched or hurt each other.

The methodological aim of research based on the democracy of experience is specifically to show how the artistic experience and scientific theorisation interact with one another, guide one another and influence one another, and how this creates critically reflective research.

A part of the research must be concerned with how experientiality in this very specific case and moment guides the theoretical formation of knowledge, and vice versa, and how the theory born from reading, thinking and debate gives direction to artistic experience. Otherwise, the scientific and artistic experiences remain either detached or completely mute to one another.

As noted, questions about the subject and object, observations, individuality, objects and entities, and so forth, can be the central strengths of any activity and skill. Therefore, there is no reason for the methodology of artistic research to be tied to research by observation, where the separation of the experiencing subject and the observing object is presupposed and required already before undertaking the research. Such a presupposition would be uncritical. There is no reason to define or structuralise the concept of experience any more than this. As a starting point, everything can be the flow of experience, where you can not step into it even once with the same foot.

The experiential continuum must be approached hermeneutically: in the artistic research, experience studies experience, producing new experiences. Research is the circular way for experience to study, organise and change itself, and no areas or axioms of experience remain in principle outside this circular self-reflection – or at least in principle; but in practice, of course, there are such areas in every research.

In this way, the realisation of the goals of criticality and openness receive a new form. Central for criticality is conceptualising experience and understanding its hermeneutical nature. Hermeneutics means not only looking for the correctness and competence of interpretation but also recognising its ambiguity and need for continuous critique. The hermeneutical study of experience begins by looking at the interpretation that always already exists of some form of experience. The next thing is to cast doubt on that interpretation, its background and conclusions. With the democracy of experience this critical doubting must in principle be aimed in an arbitrary direction. Criticality in the con-

text of the democracy of experience means specifically: i) multi-directionality, ii) lack of ultimate foundations, and iii) admitting circularity and, therefore, also the ethical nature of the interpretation.

These three basic forms of criticality become evident in different ways depending on the object, demarcation and interest of the research in each specific case. Admitting circularity corresponds with the fact that in artistic research one must also tell others about the meaning of the presented information with regards to skills and artistic practices as well as their wider individual and social connections. This interaction between the research and research object forms the ethical dimension of the research. Artistic research is a part of its object and alters it. The lack of ultimate foundations requires participation in ever-new critical rounds, in order to increase the abundance of interpretations.

Multi-directionality gives artistic research not only the opportunity to emphatically question the practices of art and research but also the obligation to follow and hear the substantiated critiques of other scientific fields and life forms. This implies that introversion becomes impossible. In the research it must be clear how the understood and interpreted experience and the artistic experience are connected.

The radical nature of the democracy of experience lies in the fact that, among other things, the different forms of experience must be able to present to each other the conditions and demands regarding changes; for the reason that physics or some specialised science would not be in the position to set boundaries for the competence of other sciences, but also so that artistic research sets demands on the competence of physics. Our knowledge of what artistic experience is, what the skill and tradition linked with it are, can decisively influence what kinds of interpretations of the observations concerning the physical world are valid.

In order for the research-based interpretation of the experience to be possible, and in order for its consequences for other research and thinking to be as clear as possible, artistic research must take a standpoint with regards to the background suppositions of man, her

being-in the-world, and her way of experiencing and knowing. The methodology of artistic research must continuously be aware of the interweaving of the facts and values in a way which is impossible for naïve research methods. Interpretational research can not be sliced into 'real' pure research and its application.

By clarifying the relationship between knowledge and experience based on human understanding, one eventually also avoids the dualism of two works, that is, the separation of the researcher and artist. The distance may be needed temporarily, for instance when there is a wish to change – perhaps even thoroughly – artistic or scientific practice. Recognising such knowledge within a non-propositional presentation can, of course, be difficult and requires courage and discipline from the tutors and critics of the research. The author of the work does indeed do well if she eases as much as possible the understanding of these issues, particularly in the present stage of things, where tutoring and assessing research and even student work based on artistic practices are still in the initial stages in many educational institutions.

When experience interprets experience, organising it into new forms – in the case of research this means forms that are accessible to others – the one who carries out the research, the "I" or perhaps rather the "we", is always already present in the event. As artist and art researchers we can not divide our being or practices into two worlds: the experienced world and the "actually" existing world. The researcher and the artist are in a continuous way part of the same flux of experience. The artistic practice and the scientific practice take place in one world, one person, one being, even though we might imagine it otherwise. As Juha Varto (2000) so characteristically expresses it, as human beings, as interpreters of experience, through experience "we are put to the stake". Artistic research takes place at that same stake where art also takes place; otherwise the topic has been changed and the meaning of research has been betrayed. There is no cold distance between the two worlds, but rather the interpretation has fire under its tail.

Here, the criticality and self-reflexivity of research is a means towards openness. Making the relationship between artistic research and artistic experience conscious, methodologically justified and critically reflective, as well as showing this relationship to others, is the way by which the lock can be opened. The opening can not in this case rest on the assumed general applicability of the naïve founding methods of science, but it must create as much general applicability and divisibility as possible.

The challenge of the language of artistic research lies in accessing the commonality and openness of expression, while at the same time retaining the uniqueness of the experiential material. The risk is introversion and credulity; while these are counteracted by knowing the tradition and doubting, criticising, renewing and abandoning it. When experience interprets itself, organises itself into new forms, in the case of research into open forms that are accessible to others, the author of the research is always already included as its object. The subject of the research, with its collective background – the tradition, language, practices, and instruments of skill and research – are a part of that field of interpretation which must be critically doubted. This is linked not only with doubting the exactness of the hermeneutic interpretation as well as its profundity, but also with the way that artistic research implements the ideal of openness. Openness can not be about arbitrary repeatability or the universality of mathematical formulas, but rather the public domain linked with language, how “I” can say something that can be commonly shared in the language that opens up to “us”.

Through the democracy of experience and the idea of abundance, the hermeneutic approach to both ourselves and our environment – as well as in regards to what we are interested in, how we research the object, and what our attitude to it is – becomes the starting point for artistic research.

As is well known, critical hermeneutics is two-pronged. It includes two thoughts and attitudes that proceed in order: 1) listening and 2) constructive critique. Critical hermeneutics starts with what is here

and now. First, the traditional interpretation is listened to in respect to how things present themselves, as if of their own accord. Second, the traditional interpretation – its goodness, exactness, and aptness – is questioned. The self-evident nature of things and phenomena, their assumed meanings, is questioned. A new interpretation is constructed through critique.

What does listening mean? The ethical encounter and the relationship to the Other begins from the rare ability, wish and need to listen to what is being said. Put another way, it demands (without giving an inch) that we give the other party the opportunity to present an argument, to reveal what they have to say in their own way and style. Of utmost importance, in any case, is that listening, given the opportunity, is grounded in the needs and means of the person who presents the message. The process should be described as the *politics of listening*, which has certain precise points of comparison to the *politics of representation*. What is essential in both cases is how the relationship is perceived; in other words, how any kind of relationship and relativity is manifested and articulated. Who does what and how – or just pretends to be doing something? Nevertheless, *the political* means that it is a question of contradictions and their practical solutions, the adaptation and turning over of opportunities.

The receiver thus must be prepared to listen. This means that one tries to be aware of those ways in which we always anticipate things. Prejudices must be revealed. It is quite unnecessary to uphold the illusion about ideal and neutral communication and encounters. Encountering otherness requires instead a critical gaze and the acquirement of distance from one's own starting points and needs. There must be air – airiness. At the same time, the difficulty of the situation elucidates the whole relationship and its disproportionality. Thinking in advance about the presuppositions of almost any encounter can not but lead to a situation where the listener is not capable of everything that the hermeneutic principle requires of her. But this failure is inevitably a

part of the issue itself. The people who participate in this game, who walk along this path, are not perfect. Something remains or does not leave a trace. Important, however, is the desire to be and to be exposed, and at least to try and listen to what the other one says. It is probably self-evident that this kind of openness cannot be only planned in advance. In the encounter one must retain space to let things happen. This is nothing mystical, only something thoroughly boringly practical. The relationship cannot be born if the space-time and energy it requires have already been used up or filled.

From pleasure, or a possible pleasure, we get to the other section of the hermeneutic starting point. The time for constructive criticism comes after the relationship – no matter how bumpy or fuzzy it might be – has opened up between the listener and the message, and simultaneously between the message and the one who conveys the message. Constructive criticism means above all that the received message is placed in the listener's own context and locality. This, again, means exactly the same as when one asks what this claim, work, harmonica break, or whatever, means to me – here and now. What does this proposed statement tell me about my life, my relationship with myself and my environment? The first part of the word pair 'constructive criticism' holds within it a continuum to the first principle of hermeneutics. The critique must be faithful to the starting point and aim to continue to maintain the relationship that has been begun with great difficulty.

That relationship should not and must not be maintained by just any old means. One must dare to give up and admit that it all went wrong. And so what! There will be another chance, and one after that. Frustration of the first degree leads to a new attempt of the second degree. But let us assume, nevertheless, that the relationship continues, that it continues critically, and that, as part of the process, the listener interprets how the message relates to what has been heard earlier. The aim is, thus, to dismantle and go through what and how something is being claimed. "The ethical" means trying to outline the ways and

means of how perhaps to proceed in the near future, starting from this situation, after what has been said, and after the results of the critical attitude towards what has been said. This is not a journey to the top of a mountain: one continues the journey in a spiral – also known as the hermeneutic circle.

In the best case scenario, listening and a constructively critical relationship have created an unusual and even surprising situation, where something unexpected has been born, something which only stems from the encounter of two parties;<sup>7</sup> in other words, from an encounter which involves taking turns. Vattimo writes: "The interpretation is not a description by a 'neutral' observer, but a dialogical event where those who discuss are equally involved and from which they leave changed; they understand one another to the extent that they have been included into the third horizon, which does not belong to either, but into which they have been placed and which puts them in place." (Vattimo 1999, 20).

How does the previously presented claim about the ethical starting point affect the journey itself? There is reason to openly admit that it is strongly limiting – though that would hardly be surprising, as we have come this far. The journey available, this time an exploration, is a typical ethical project. It requires almost too much. The distance between the need to listen and the time necessary for a critical approach can be excessively long. In the background lurks not the possibility but the probability of failure. The situation is not pitiful, but emphatically the prerequisite for ethics.

7 Philosophically, it is that which is unexpected and new that opens the ethical, third place (see Vadén & Hannula 2003; also Žižek 2003, Badiou 2002).